Victory Through Surrender

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VICTORY THROUGH SURRENDER

A MESSAGE CONCERNING CONSECRATED LIVING

BY THE REV.
B. FAY MILLS

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I.

"*LIFE MORE ABUNDANT.*"

A PORTION of the Church of God is hungry. While there is a tendency toward materialism and worldliness on the part of many, there are encouraging indications that a rapidly increasing number of Christians are hungering and thirsting for a more extensive righteousness, as manifested in the abiding presence of Christ within them. There are two convictions growing in many Christians; one is that they are dissatisfied with that which they now have of spiritual knowledge and experience and power, and the other that there is something

better than they have known, in the salvation that has been provided for them. Some one has well said that "Christian experience is the realization of that which is already true for us in Christ." While I do not mean to suggest that there is any new principle discovered by which a man may walk in the royal road of righteousness, I do mean to say that there is a life in Christ that is so much richer and more filled with joy and strength and power than the experience of the ordinary Christian, as to be almost a different thing, worthy to be mentioned in terms of contrast rather than of comparison. The deepest teachings of Christ are almost meaningless for a very large number of the members of the church. For example, He says, "Abide in me and I in you." The statement is made that, abiding in Christ, we have actual

safety (John xv:6); Continual cleansing (John xv.2); the love of God (John xv:19); perfect obedience (John xv:10; 1 John v:3); love of our fellow men (John xv:12); answered prayer (John xv:7); the bearing of fruit (John xv:5, 8, 16); the power to refrain from sin (1 John iii:6 cf. 1 John 1:8, 10); and continual joy (John xv:10).

One of two things is true; either that the disciple is possessed of all these blessings, or that he is not abiding in Christ and Christ in him. In reading the epistles of Paul, it would almost seem as though he were writing to people of different spiritual experience and knowledge from the average disciple of the present day. For example, read this prayer:

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give

unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the Hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

Here he prays that the power which

God wrought in Christ when He raised him from the dead, might be experienced by his followers. Or take this prayer as an example:

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power

that worketh in us, unto him be glory, in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

It is not possible that Paul uttered petitions for his friends that would be impossible of fulfillment in their experience. The very heart of the teachings of Paul may be summed up in the two phrases, "In Christ," and "Christ in you." In Colossians 1:27 he says that the mystery which was hid for ages and generations but that now is made known to the saints to whom God would make known these mysteries, is, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

He was able to live a life of which the horizon was bounded by Christ and the vital principle was Christ; so that he could say, "For me to live is Christ." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; and yet not I, but

Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

There is a life of perfect peace, of the exact and full knowledge of God, of the wisdom of the Spirit, of the strength of Jehovah, of the power of the Holy Ghost; a life of joy and continual victory.

The object of this little book is to endeavor to point out, in the briefest and simplest possible manner, by the suggestions of Scripture and observation and experience, the method appointed by God, by which we may enter such a "highway of holiness," and continue therein.

II.

ARE YOU WILLING?

IT requires a great deal of seeming sacrifice for a man to be willing to be born again. So many are content with what they have by nature that they are not willing to receive what they might have by grace. For that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and the flesh will always lust against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. If a man might be born of the Spirit and retain with satisfaction the life of the flesh at the same time, there might be a great many more who would seek to enter the kingdom of

God; but in reality no one would enter it, for the vital principle of living in the kingdom of God is that we walk in the Spirit and so do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The very first question that confronts a person who is thinking of beginning a Christian life is the question at the head of this chapter. Are you willing? It is the question of questions. When a man is willing to let God lead him, God always teaches him. He that wills to do the will of God, knows of the doctrine. When a man is willing to be transformed by the grace of God to be, not what he desires, but what God desires, God always transforms him.

It is sometimes astonishing to see how little a person need know or be in order to begin to be a Christian. The only question is this: are you willing ?

This is also true of the entrance into the larger life and the living of it. In every development of knowledge and peace, and strength, and growth, and power, there is still the same question: "Are you willing?" For God has chosen weak things, and base things, and despised things, and things that are not, in order that no flesh may glory in his presence. To have the peace of God, it is necessary to be willing to be satisfied with divine peace, rather than with earthly contentment. To have the knowledge of God, it is necessary to recognize the fact that the wisdom of man is foolishness with God, and that God has made foolish the wisdom of this world. In order that Christ should be "made to us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption," it is necessary that we should deny our own

discretion and righteousness, and purity and freedom.

The whole secret of abiding in Christ, and having Christ abide in us, is this: First, that we should be willing that all the horizon of the life should be bounded by Christ; that he should be the house out of which we should never choose to go; and, on the other hand, that we should be willing that he should abide in us as the permanent proprietor of the mind, the heart and the will, casting out everything displeasing to him, and bringing his royal train to fill all the unoccupied chambers of the soul. When we see that Christ makes this the door to every experience and attainment of value, and when we realize that to pass through that door, it is necessary to turn away from every other path, we begin to perceive that which is

called the strait gate and the narrow way that leadeth unto life. The philosophy of this we need not understand, nor is it profitable to be worrying our minds with the search after philosophical principles that underlie the truths of God's revelation. Some of it, indeed, we cannot help but understand, but whether we comprehend it or not, this is the vital point against which the adversary will bring his efforts to bear, that we should be unwilling in the uttermost to surrender, to give ourselves up to the Spirit and the will of Christ dwelling within us. If God can make the path plain to you, are you willing to walk in it? If you can see the first step in the life of entire consecration, are you willing to take it? Are you willing? Are you willing?

Any further knowledge or light

might prove to be a curse instead of a blessing until you answered this simple question. Let it be answered now, this minute, saying in that entire lack of knowledge and of self-confidence, which is the essence of trust and of peace, "Lord, I am ready; speak, for thy servant heareth, and when thou hast spoken, I will not pause to consider whether I shall run or tarry, but the word that thou dost speak unto me, that will I perform."

"I will go where you want me to go, Lord,
Over mountain or plain or sea;
I will do what you want me to do, Lord,
I will be what you want me to be."

Do not say, "Show me thy will, and I will think about it"; but make the surrender first instead of last, and say, "Lord, I have surrendered; what wilt thou have me to do? Show me, and *I will do it.*" And if this prayer is

uttered with honest intention to do what may be the clearly revealed will of God, you may be assured that you are not far from the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

III.

LET IT BE DEFINITE.

THE question is frequently asked, as to whether a life of consecration is an act or an experience; whether the full development of the Christian life is a growth or is instantaneous in its manifestation. The answer to these questions is that it is both; it is an experience that is caused by an act; it is a life which must be definitely commenced and definitely lived, in order that God may develop in us his full purpose regarding our character and our joy. There are those who are always learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth; who seem to

be always hungering, but never filled; always acknowledging their weakness but never receiving strength; always fighting, but never conquering. There must, unquestionably, be something infinitely better than this, worthy of the name of Christian experience. I believe that every permanent advancement in knowledge and character is caused by some definite act of surrender to God. This is true of the commencement of the Christian life, and it is also true concerning that life of faith and of the conscious presence and wisdom and joy and strength of God himself, which is the desire of many, but the experience of few of the followers of the Master.

The place into which God will lead us, will be a large one, with which it will take not only time but eternity, to become acquainted ; but the door by

which we must enter, is a plain one, and consists of the definite consecration of all we are and have and may become. I believe that with the experience of every Christian who knows what it is to abide in Christ and to have Christ abide in him, there has come a time when he definitely took his hands off from himself; henceforth to count himself not his own, but bought with a price, and to glorify God with his body and his spirit, which are God's. Do not be getting ready to do this. Do it. Many a time we may have been moved in the congregation by the truth of God, and said, "Some time I will lead a consecrated life," but the seed has been that which fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air have come and gathered it up. Sometimes in meditation and reading of the Word, and

prayer, we have been impressed that the time had come to let the whole being be utterly given up to God; but we have let the attention be diverted and the mind turned away while we have waited for a further revelation which never came, and which will never come until the act of complete consecration has been definitely accomplished. Let it be now. Without the slightest reference to any emotion or emotional impulse, but because it is our reasonable service to present the body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, let it be done now. Get alone with God immediately. Tell him that so far as you know your own heart, you do now consciously yield it entirely to him; that you give to him all things that you know, and all things that you do not know, all that you are and have, and all that may come to you in

the future; that you offer yourself to God as a sacrifice to be passed as entirely from your control as though you were an offering literally slaughtered and offered in death upon an altar.

And when you have done this, no matter whether or not there be an immediate response in the fire from heaven that shall seem to consume the sacrifice, count it done never to be undone, and never needing to be done again. After that, if God gives you an impulse, act on it. If the vision tarry, wait for it, but let it be distinctly settled in your mind once and forever that you are God's, and that, no matter what experience or lack of experience may come to you, you will never count yourself your own again. Let it be definite. Let it be done now.

There are conditions that we can not know concerning the victorious Chris-

tian life until we have definitely surrendered the will to God. It seems as though by this very act, God gave to us the clearness of eyesight regarding the conditions of peace and power, and also supplied us with the necessary strength and resolution in order that we might enter into the fulness of blessing. The very first thing is to surrender unconditionally, to give to God not only what we know, but what we do not know: ignorance as well as knowledge, and poverty as well as wealth, and to do it once for all; just as it was with Abraham when he heard the voice of God that called him out from his father's land that he might be a wanderer on the face of the earth, giving himself up entirely to the guidance and sustenance of his God. The place into which he was led was one of even completer consecration, until the

last thing had been surrendered; and God poured upon him unlimited blessings. So will it be with every soul, who, without question, or hesitation, or condition, or limitation, definitely surrenders the will to be forever subject to the will of God. The true essence of faith is the step that leads us to take the hands forever off from ourselves, trusting God for all consequences; and that act in itself will be such a determining one as to set in motion forces that will lead us into the place of the deeper knowledge of God, into a wider fellowship with him and into the stronghold of security, where the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall keep sentry over the heart and mind, in Christ Jesus. Let the matter of entire self-surrender be settled once for all, and now.

IV.

MAKE IT COMPLETE.

"BECAUSE thou hast done this thing," said Jehovah unto his friend Abraham, "by myself I have sworn, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

He had done other things. He had left his father's home at the call of God, and had become a wanderer, not knowing whither he went, sojourning in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with his son Isaac, and ready to sacrifice all things at the word of his Master; but through

all his life until this hour, the experiences and consecration of the past were only preparing him for the supreme test of the offering up of his son.

There is an influence about any sort of honest consecration to God that leads by an inexorable law to the necessity of a further consecration; until there are suggested to us undreamed of possibilities in the things that may be surrendered at the call of God. To consecrate one thing is to hear the call to the consecration of other things, until at last it may be possible for one to so surrender the last thing as to hear the word that shall say, "Because thou hast done this thing, I will bless thee and make thee a blessing."

There were people round about this dweller in tents, who were idolaters, and whose custom it was to offer up their children unto idols; and when

once the suggestion had come into the mind of Abraham that he might be unwilling to do for his God what the people about him seemed to be eager to do for the sake of their false worship, there could be no rest for him until the knife had been sharpened and laid at the throat of this son who was the child of promise. It seemed as though by his obedience it would be necessary for him to make God disloyal to his own word, for he had said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called;" and now it seemed to the father as if the word of God was to be made of none effect by the sacrifice of this son. But this was a man who in the name of God had learned to count the things that are not as those that are, and he believed God, accounting that it was possible for God to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he re-

ceived him, in a figure. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform, and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."

When God was endeavoring to soften the heart of Pharaoh in order that he might allow the Children of Israel to go on a three days' journey to sacrifice in the wilderness, there were various propositions looking toward their release that were made by the Egyptian king. One of the first suggestions that he made was when he said to Moses and Aaron, "Go ye, and sacrifice to your God in the land;" the second suggestion was, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness, only you shall not go very far away;" the third

proposition was, that the men should go, but that the women and children should be left behind. And finally, when he found that none of these things were availing, he said, "Go ye, and serve the Lord, only let your flocks and your herds be stayed." But Moses answered, "Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us. There shall not a hoof be left behind; for everything must we take to serve the Lord our God, and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither."

It is not possible for one who is entering upon a life of entire consecration, to reserve a known or an unknown thing from dedication unto God. If the devil can cause the people to sacrifice to God in the land, or not to go

far away, or to leave anything in connection with their families or earthly relationships, or to reserve any thing of material value from entire surrender to God, he always gains the victory. The fact is, that when one wills to follow God fully, he is not able to make any sort of reservation, expressed or implied; for he does not know with what he must serve the Lord until he gets into the place where God can reveal the secrets of his counsel unto him.

It was so again with the Israelites when they entered into the land of Canaan. The walls of Jericho had fallen down flat, and yet they were overcome when the army marched against the little city of Ai because of the lack of obedience of one of the members of the host.

After this, when they had again

sought God's favor by the taking away of the evil thing and the punishment of the offender, there came to Joshua men from Gibeon, who heard what he had done unto Jericho and unto Ai, who did work wilily and went to make as if they had been ambassadors, and put old sacks upon their horses, and wine bottles old and rent, and bound up, and old shoes clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them, and all the bread of their provision was dirty and mouldy, and they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him and the men of Israel, "We be come from a far country. Now, therefore, make ye a league with us." And the men of Israel fell into the trap, and made a league with the inhabitants of Gibeon to let them live. And the princes of the congregation swore unto them, and it came to pass

at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them. And then it was, seeing that they had fallen into a trap, they arranged with the people of Gibeon to be to them hewers of wood and drawers of water, instead of executing upon these opponents of God the judgment which had been long ago pronounced, and had been waiting for execution. And God told the people that because their leaders had made this compact, instead of fulfilling his law against the idolaters; that, so long as they abode in the land of promise, so long should there abide by their side the people who should lead them into continual temptation, and should be snares and traps unto them, and scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes, until the peo-

ple of Israel should perish from off the good land which the Lord their God had given them.

All the sad history of the doubting and vacillation and defeat, all the going away into idolatry, all the weakness in the time of battle, and the defeat in the presence of the foes of God, all the sad and bitter experiences that finally culminated in the Babylonish captivity, were due to the fact that with the Gibeonites and some other idolaters of the land of Canaan the people made a compact, instead of utterly destroying them at the first.

Saul had a similar experience in connection with the campaign against Agag, whom he was commanded to utterly destroy, with "all that he had, men and women and infants and suckling kids and sheep, camels and asses." But "Saul and the people spared Agag

and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings and of the lambs," under the pretext that they needed to have material to sacrifice unto the Lord ; and Samuel said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord: behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams; for rebellion is as the sign of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

The trouble with the young man whom Jesus loved, was, that he lacked one thing in the surrender of his will to God, and when the test came by which he might show that everything had been surrendered, he was not ready to meet it. We need to give

up all we know and have, and all we may know or be or have. This only is faith, and this is the faith that worketh unto righteousness.

On his twenty-first birth-day, Jonathan Edwards wrote in his diary, "I will make the salvation of my soul my life work." Later he said, "If I believed that it were permitted to one man — and to only one — in this generation, to lead a life of complete consecration to God, I would live in every respect as though I believed myself to be that one."

There is a story told about a monk who was disobedient to the law of the superior of the monastery, and was taken out to be buried alive. He was placed standing in the grave, and the earth was filled in so that he could not move his feet. The superior asked him, "Are you dead yet?" and he

said, "No." The earth was then filled in, until it rose up on his chest, and it was difficult for him to breathe, and when the question was repeated, he said,"No, I will not die." The earth was then filled in until it was almost impossible for the man to speak, and a few more shovelfuls of earth would have smothered him, and he said, "I give up. I will die."

I would it might be that every reader of these words should be ready to pray the simple words of this hymn :

O God, my heart doth sigh for Thee;
Let me die, let me die.
Now set my soul at liberty:
Let me die, let me die
To all the trifling things of earth,
They're now to me of little worth.
My Savior calls, I'm going forth;
Let me die, let me die.

Oh, I must die to scoffs and jeers;
Let me die, let me die.
I must be dead to slavish fears;
Let me die, let me die.

To all the world and its applause,
To all the customs, fashions, laws,
Of those who hate the humbling cross,
  Let me die, let me die.

If Christ would live and reign in me,
  I must die, I must die.
Like him I crucified must be,
  I must die, I must die.
So dead that no desire may rise
To pass for good, or great, or wise,
In any but my Savior's eyes.
  Let me die, let me die.

Begin at once to drive the nail;
  Let me die, let me die.
Oh, suffer not my heart to fail;
  Let me die, let me die.
My God, I look to Thee for power
To help me to endure the hour,
When crucified by Sovereign power
  I shall die, I shall die.

When I am dead, then Lord to Thee
  I shall live, I shall live.
My time, my strength, my all to Thee,
  I do give, I do give.
Nothing for self shall henceforth be,
Dear Lord, I've given myself to Thee,
For time and for eternity,
  I shall live, I shall live.

V.

COUNT IT DONE.

NOT long ago, in an inquiry meeting, a pastor said that "Some folks think that one way to become a Christian is to commence to act as though you were already a Christian." The leader of the meeting said, "That is the only way," and I am sure that I agree with him. The only principle upon which prayer is ever answered, is that enunciated by the Master when he said: "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them."

When a man takes some definite promise of Christ, such, for instance,

as the wonderful words, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," and says for himself, "I have come to him the best I know, and I believe his word, he has not cast me out," he is fairly in the kingdom of God. Or, if he takes the words, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me," and says concerning it, "I know that I have opened the door, and I believe his word; he has come in, and he is now within me," Christ will make real for him that which he receives by faith We need continually to keep in mind the fact that the principles that govern the entrance into the Christian life are the same principles that govern every advanced step, and the development of the life of God in man. The

Savior said to the ten lepers, "Go, show yourselves to the priests," and while they were still covered with leprosy, they turned to go to the priests. There was for them no indication that they had been healed, save the implication contained in the words that bade them be examined by the health officer. "And it came to pass that, *as they went*, they were cleansed." The command given to the man with the withered hand was, "Stretch forth thine hand." This was the thing that he had been wanting to do for years and had been unable to accomplish. If he had been possessed by any spirit of unbelief, he would have hesitated to make the effort; but as he made the effort, the power to do what God told him, came, "And he stretched forth his hand, and it was restored whole like unto the other."

When the Israelites had come to the borders of the river Jordan, on their second approach to the boundary of the promised land, as they advanced into the water, the waters were rolled back, and they passed over upon dry ground. And when they came to one of the great walled cities which had frightened the timorous spies forty years before, they were told to march round about it once every day for seven days, and on the seventh day seven times, and then, at the signal given by the rams' horns of the priests, they were to shout. If there had been a spirit in them that said, "For what shall we shout?" they would have been overcome by their enemies. But as the shout of victory went up when as yet there was no victory in sight, God made real for his people that which they had received by faith, and the

walls fell down flat; and, so far as the people of Israel were concerned, they gained a bloodless victory.

There never was, and there never will be any way to walk in the light of God other than by faith. In fact, the thing that God offers to us is his own faith, the principle by which he lives, and the knowledge that what he says shall be accomplished. The exact expression that the Master used in speaking to his disciples, as the word is recorded in the eleventh chapter of Mark, is not as the King James version puts it, "Have faith in God," but rather as the margin records it, "Have the faith of God." What Paul said to the Galatians concerning the principle of the life that he lived with Christ was, that the life which he now lived in the flesh, he lived by "the faith of the Son of God." The gift which God makes

to us in giving us faith, is that sublime confidence which enables us to count the things that are not as those that are, and thus the faith is reckoned unto us for righteousness. When the Lord Jesus uttered a command, or worked a miracle, he had no question in his mind but that what he said would be perfectly accomplished; and just so far as we grow to be like him, and have no will but the will of God, abiding in Christ and having Christ abide in us, do we have the same sublimity of faith, and we shall ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us.

We need to make the words in the sixth chapter of Romans exceedingly practical, where Paul says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let

not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. . . . . Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? . . . For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. . . . But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting

life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I would to God that we might see that when we present ourselves to God as if we were alive from the dead, that God does indeed make us alive from the dead, and that no practical faith was ever manifested toward him in vain. As a friend of mine said, in turning his back forever upon having any confidence in the flesh, and utterly surrendering himself to God, "I felt as though I walked out to the end of the ridge pole in the darkness, and jumped off, and Jesus caught me."

Having made the surrender definite, and by the revelation of God having made it complete, let it be fully settled in your own mind that you have done this once for all; that you have fully accepted God to be all things unto you,

and that God has accepted you that in this way he may perfectly fulfill your wish, and, though all the devils in hell and all the faithless and half-consecrated people upon earth should try to shake your confidence, set to your seal in this that God is true, and reckon yourself to be "dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"I see a door, a multitude near by.
In creed and quarrel, sure disciples all!
Gladly they would, they say, enter the hall,
But cannot, the stone threshold is so high.
From unseen hand, full many a feeding crumb,
Slow dropping o'er the threshold high, doth come;
They gather and eat, with much disputing hum.

"Still and anon a loud, clear voice doth call;
'Make your feet clean, and enter so the hall!'
They hear, they stoop, they gather each a crumb.
Oh, the deaf people! would they were also dumb!

Hear how they talk! and lack of Christ deplore,
Stamping with muddy feet about the door,
And will not make them clean to walk upon his floor.

"But see, one comes; he listens to the Voice;
Careful he wipes his weary, dusty feet!
The Voice has spoken to him is left no choice;
He hurries to obey, that only is meet.
Low sinks the threshold, leveled with the ground;
This man leaps in, to liberty he's bound.
The rest go talking, walking, picking round."

VI.

THE TRYING OF YOUR FAITH.

NOTHING is stronger than its weakest part. No man has more faith than he has in the time of the severest testing. No man even knows whether he has faith or not, until he is tested, but in a time of testing he does know it, and knows it with a confidence that puts to flight all his enemies, and gives him the joy and satisfaction and courage of one who has been a conqueror, and who knows that in the days to come he still shall conquer. James says to us: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers testings, knowing this: that the

trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Paul says: "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The Savior said: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The great apostle said of his own ex-

perience: "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong." Peter said: "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye." The Word also says: "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

The terrible power of the adversary is manifested in making men satisfied with second best things, and while the Christian is continually kept in perfect peace, he may be also assured that the way that he shall gain the cause and guaranty of peace shall be through the testing of his faith. No man ever left aught for the kingdom of God's sake, but he received a hundredfold in this present time. But, on the other hand, no

man ever stepped out in the Spirit of Christ, saying: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God," but he was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." It is indeed very significant that after those days of testing we read that "Jesus returned *in the power of the Spirit* unto Galilee," which is the first expression of a similar import that we find in the gospel record. In his experience in the desert with the adversary he was "tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin" and he was also passing through the experience which fitted him for the Garden of Gethsemane and the hour of darkness and the evil time when it seemed to him as though his God had forsaken him.

Men may have opinions concerning certain truths of the Word of God, believing that they are the truth, but a

man never knows the truth in such a way that it makes him entirely free until he has been tested to the last limit of his confidence, and has realized in the mighty strength and power of God that he can always be led forth to triumph in the Lord Jesus.

It is a great fact that when a man stretches himself on the altar, God binds him fast, and when he lays himself willingly on the cross, God sees to it that the nails are driven, and that the sufferer remains there until the death has come that makes possible the glorious resurrection.

It is not a hard thing to fight, so long as we may gain the victory, and the victory is already partly gained when we are anticipating the attack of a foe and are thoroughly prepared with the armor of God against him. It is a tremendous warning that says that

"we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." It is indeed true that the nearer we come in our lives to God, that the more subtle and deadly are the emissaries of evil that are sent against us, so that the very shrewdest of all the devils in hell are the wicked spirits that attack those who would live in heavenly places. But it is also true that there is a way of continual victory, as in that same passage the writer says: "Ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." . . . "Ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." . . . "Ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." The armor which he so graphically and particularly described

is all of it summed up in a word in another place where he says: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," for Christ is called the truth, and our righteousness, and our peace, and our faith, and our salvation, and just so far as we have appropriated him will he in the hour of testing make himself all these things to us; girdle, and breastplate, and sandals, and shield, and helmet, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

When the Romans landed on the coast of Britain there came swarming to meet them tens of thousands of the savage natives of the country, and as the primitive people gathered along their white cliffs and looked down upon this strange foe, they uttered howls of rage, and seemed to be about to cast themselves down and exterminate the invaders. It was then that the Romans,

offering sacrifice to their gods and looking for one moment out across the sea toward far distant Rome which they might never see again, instead of preparing their ships for flight, that thus in case of the defeat which seemed to be almost a certainty, they might flee in safety, lighted each man a torch and set fire to the vessels which would have been their only hope of escape in case of disaster. And as the savages along the cliffs, many times in number the invaders, looked down upon that heroic act, they were struck with a fear that caused a panic to come upon them, and they fled before the heroic band who had counted the cost and squarely met the issue in the time of testing, as the dry leaves are whirled along by the tempestuous wind.

God said to the shrinking Jeremiah: "Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I

confound thee before them, for behold I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee."

The sound by which a man says "I do now belong to God," is a challenge to the enemy to do his worst, and the doing of the worst by the adversary and the consequent victory that comes to the child of God who has no confidence in the flesh, is the means by which his eyesight is cleared, his strength increased, his faith developed, and he is led in the confidence of triumph from victory unto victory.

VII.

WAITING UPON GOD.

"YE have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by his Spirit which he hath given unto us." After the trying of our faith comes patience. This is a great word, which implies in its meaning not simply to be uncomplaining in the time of testing,

but rather everything that comes between the commencement of a Christian life and the final victory when we shall hear the word of commendation for those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, have been seeking for glory, and honor and immortality.

No one has ever learned the secret of the Most High, who has not known what it means to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him. We are told that "those who wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth;" and that "it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." We read that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint;" and the counsel of God upon this subject may be summed up in

the words: "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."

After the garden, and the cross, and the resurrection, and just before his ascension to be with his Father, Christ bade his disciples "not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me." This waiting upon God is anything except the occupation of the idler. First of all, it furnishes for God the necessary element of time in the perfecting of our characters. Although God is tremendously in earnest, he is never in a hurry, and for ages he had been working in the world before the fulness of the time in which he might send forth his only-begotten Son; and even after all these centuries of God's planning and work-

ing, "we know the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." *It takes time to make men and women.* I believe that the secret of Paul's counting himself perfect, and almost with the same breath announcing that he does not count himself yet to have attained perfection, lies in the fact that we may be perfect children, while we are not

as yet men and women, but are growing day by day into "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

So far from doing nothing, this is the time of real working, and the growth and the development of fruit. "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain." We know that the time of waiting on his part is by no means a time of inaction, but of careful watching and tilling and helping in the processes that shall bring into perfection the fruit of all his thought and toil. We must not think God inactive or indifferent concerning us because we do not *see* every hour some new fruit of his toil in us. Concerning those with whom the good seed was sown that was to spring up

and bring forth fruit an hundred fold, we read the significant words, these are they that "bring forth fruit with patience." "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

Again, the place of waiting is a place of absolute humility. The Psalmist says: "Truly, my soul waiteth upon God;" and as we look into the margin, we find that the Hebrew expression is, "My soul is silent unto God." There are things that God cannot tell except with the still, small voice, and that we cannot hear except when we are in the place of absolute silence and freedom from all human

questioning, and thinking, and wishing, and striving.

Still further, this is the place of exclusive dependence upon God. No more pertinent exhortation could be voiced than this: "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him." The secret of the Lord which is with them that fear him, so far as it can be revealed in words, I think is this; that God is satisfied not with our simply being dependent upon him, but with our being independent of everything else. "Wait thou *only* upon God." There were things which God could do in his struggling with Jacob, but there was one thing which he could not do, and that was what Jacob did when, realizing that all his scheming had been in vain, and that now he could not even run from the vengeance of his brother Esau, and

hanging as a poor, weak cripple upon God, he cried out: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." There were things that Elisha could do for the woman who was in such dire distress; but this woman had to be shut up alone with God before the increase of the oil might come, and her debt might be paid, and she and her children have provision for all their need; and any soul that is longing to deny himself, and to count the things that are not as those that are, who will lay hold upon God in that spirit which will know nothing unless God teaches it, and have nothing unless God gives it, and be nothing except by the birth and life, and strength and development of God, unto him will be revealed all the riches of the knowledge of God and the boundless love of his only-begotten Son.

In the fourth place, this waiting upon God is an act of exceeding great intensity and persistence. It is not enough to have a spasm of entering into the closet for an interview with God; but to have so turned away from other things that we shall wait for him more than the watchers wait for the morning. David says, "On thee do I wait all the day," and there is no more intense occupation than that of such waiting. Elijah heard the sound of abundance of rain in his heart before he saw the cloud the size of a man's hand in the sky; and even after he was certain that the rain was coming, and had risked his life upon the prediction of its near approach, still did he bow his head down between his knees and wait before God until the shower was at hand. He knew that the rain was there, and he knew that it was in the

power of his intense waiting before God to bring it; and I believe that unless the rain had come, that Elijah would have died in that place of self-denying faith, bowed down before God and claiming his promise. We read of the unjust judge who, because of the continual coming of the woman, gave to her her desire, and of the man who rose to give unto his friend because of his importunity; and immediately in connection with this latter incident we find the words: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Ages ago the prophet said: "If the vision tarry, wait for it," and so for those of us who have been led, step by

step, until the last thing has been laid upon God's altar, and the faith has been tested by the attacks of the adversary, and we have gained confidence by the fact that we have not been overcome, for us there is the place of silence before God, and of that patient waiting in which he may fulfill his will, and see in us the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

VIII.

VICTORY

AN unknown benefactor has sent me the right message for this place. It is this: "You need not count your resources; they are limitless. You need not measure your strength; it is measureless. You need not calculate difficulties; is anything too hard for the Lord? You need not tremble for results; God's results are all successes. He stands with you beside a dead world and promises its resurrection."

There is the definite statement in the Word of God, that when patience has perfected her work, the man of God

shall be complete, shall "be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." There is also the statement which we have before quoted, that "tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

The life of a man who has passed through such a process as this, and is being continually developed by the Spirit of God, is a life of continual victory over ignorance and perplexity. Sometimes a man says that he is thoroughly consecrated unto God, and then asks this question: "How is it that you are able to tell what God's will is concerning you?" and "how do you make a choice between good things, as to which one is the best thing?" The asking of this question is an indication either

that the man has not surrendered himself fully unto the Spirit of God, or else that he has not realized the fulness of his inheritance in the appropriation of the wisdom of God. The statement is very distinct, that "Christ is made unto us wisdom," and the prayer of Paul, which was quoted in the first article of this series, was, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, might give unto the Ephesians the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Even under the Old Dispensation, one of the spirit-enlightened saints had received this truth, and tells it in words that could not be surpassed in any age, when he says: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths."

A friend of mine says: "People sometimes lean to their own understanding when they do not rest upon it;" and in order to have the Lord's wisdom, and to know continually that we are working according to his counsel, we have but to be in the place of perpetual self-denial and acknowledgement of his guidance. Sometimes, indeed, when we have not known for ourselves by any definite indication that we were being led of God, our eyes are afterward opened to see that the Lord was fulfilling his promises, and was causing us to walk in his statutes and his judgments and in the way that we should go.

The life of abiding in Christ is a life of victory over sin and selfishness. God always administers his own property. He may not seem to be interested in another's estate; but just so far

and just so fast as thought and imagination are brought into captivity unto Christ, does the Lord possess the thoughts and the imaginations and the words and the deeds, and work in them and through them for his own glory. The reason that he does not keep some lives in the condition of continual cleansing is that he does not have the opportunity. He cultivates only the fields that belong to him, by the definite relinquishment of the former owner; but these fields he always does cultivate, and while a man may not have attained his perfect growth in an instant, he may be sure of this, that God will keep him in a place where, moment by moment, he will cleanse away his sin, and will protect him even from the approach of sin, even as someone has beautifully said, " the con-

tinual action of the eye-lid protects the eye."

Again, the life of self-surrender and appropriation of God is a complete victory over fear and unrest. God never uses meaningless words, and to the fullest does he fulfill his promise, "Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." One of the sins that it seems hardest for God to forgive and eradicate, is the fatal sin of anxiety; but when one has no ambition but God's ambition, and no will but the will of God, he may dwell in a perfect calm which the world cannot give nor take away. When we are anxious for nothing, but "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, are letting our requests be known unto God, the peace of God which passeth all under-

standing keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The word "keep" is a beautiful expression that refers to the action of the Roman sentry, so that the peace of God not only abides in our hearts, but on the outside stands as a sentry to ward off attacks which might prove to be disturbers of our perfect rest.

Still further, the life of the complete trusting of one's self to God, is a victory over weakness and vacillation. In all the ages, there has gone up the cry that came from the broken heart of the king who had terribly sinned against light and opportunity: "Renew a right spirit within me." This word "right" means constant, and it is for the guaranty of constancy that some have been continually looking. This, too, is a result of the life of self-surrender and of waiting upon God. After Hosea

had portrayed the attitude of the people that desired to forsake all their sins in their return unto God, he promises unto the people who have thus yielded themselves to him, forgiveness and life and restoration and refreshment and delicacy and strength and growth and beauty, and then he adds, "Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do any more with idols?'" The great blessing of constancy is for the man who is able to say, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed."

And finally, this is the place where we realize the enduement of power, concerning which Christ bade his disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until they had been endued with the power from on high, and concerning which he said to the seventy disciples when he sent them out, "Behold I give you power over all the power of the enemy."

When we have realized that God has chosen the weak things, and the foolish things, and the base and despised things, and the non-existent things, and that to accomplish his purposes he is looking for the man that has made himself of no reputation, then indeed do we realize that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." To-day I believe all the infinite life of God, in purity, and wisdom, and peace, and strength, and power, is waiting for the one who is willing to receive it.

Christ says to us as he said to the father of the demoniac lad, "If *thou canst*, all things are possible to him that believeth." He said to Martha, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God,"

and to us to-day he says the same, for the surrender to him and the victory of God within our souls, is the measure of our faith. So shall we find this fact made true within us and through us, that they that "wait upon the Lord shall change their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint;" and so shall it be that we shall pass from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from victory to victory, and "come at last to the end of life and the beginning of life, and pass from glory unto glory."

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